



California
Department of
Health Services

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State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Services



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TO: California Health Care Providers

SUBJECT: INFLUENZA VACCINE AVAILABILITY

Because of the unique influenza vaccine supply and distribution situation this season, CDC has allowed sanofi pasteur (formerly Aventis Pasteur) to distribute doses from the CDC stockpile. sanofi pasteur intends to sell these doses with a return policy so that providers and facilities may order vaccine with minimal financial risk. Providers may return unused vaccine for a credit and will have financial responsibility for return shipping costs only. Doses purchased in this way may be administered to any person consistent with current state/local guidelines for use of influenza vaccine.

To order from sanofi pasteur (Aventis) log on to VaccineShoppe.com or call 1-800-VACCINE (1-800-822-2463). Prices for this direct purchase vaccine are: \$81.25 for the 10 dose vial, \$107.65 per box of adult syringes, and \$105.00 per box of pediatric dose syringes. In addition, customers may receive their 2% VaccineShoppe.com discount and a 2% prompt pay discount where applicable.

Alternately, contact your usual distributor, whose prices may vary.

Influenza activity remains relatively mild in California, but is widespread in some eastern states, Canadian provinces, and other countries. The season is not over and activity is likely to peak in February, although the extent of activity is impossible to predict. Most isolates have demonstrated a good antigenic match with the vaccine.

Given this year's pattern of influenza activity, it is not too late to vaccinate your patients. This vaccine can also be used for workplace campaigns.

All restrictions on the use of influenza vaccine have been dropped for this season. We still encourage outreach for priority groups and patients at high risk of complications from influenza.

Medicare reimbursement for administration of influenza vaccine doubled to \$18 after January 1, 2005.

For the remainder of this season, VFC vaccine can also be used for any patient when administered through public health or non-profit clinic. Providers should consider using remaining VFC vaccine until the expiration date in June as a “primer dose” for patients under nine years of age who have never received any prior doses of influenza vaccine. This will allow for use of only one dose next season, rather than two doses separated by at least one month for maximal protection.

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